

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 10225

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EG
SUBJECT: PARTY LAW PASSED

REF: A. CAIRO 8870 AND B. CAIRO 9508

1. ON JUNE 14, PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY APPROVED GOE
VERSION OF LAW PERMITTING ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL
PARTIES IN EGYPT, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1952
REVOLUTION.

2. GOE WILL CONTINUE CONTROL ESTABLISHMENT
SEPARATE POLITICAL GROUPS BY PROVISION IN NEW LAW
WHICH SETS UP AN ASU "CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE" ON WHICH
CENTER (GOVERNMENT) PARTY HOLDS AUTOMATIC MAJORITY.
ALL OPPOSITION DEPUTIES, INCLUDING SOME CENTER PARTY
CLOSET WAFDISTS, BOYCOTTED WHAT THEY BELIEVED
"SHAM" DEBATE, COMPLAINING THAT THE ELECTORATE, NOT
THE GOVERNMENT, SHOULD PASS ON ESTABLISHMENT
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POLITICAL PARTIES.

3. MAIN SURPRISE OF PROCEEDINGS WAS SADAT'S
PUBLIC ATTACK AGAINST THE MOST IMPORTANT PRE-
REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, THE WAFD, WHICH WAS MAKING
GREAT STRIDES IN REORGANIZING IN PREPARATION FOR
APPLYING FOR RECOGNITION AS A LEGAL PARTY. ON

JUNE 5 AND 16, HOWEVER, SADAT UNEXPECTEDLY ANNOUNCED "THERE WILL BE NO RETURN TO THE STATE OF THE PASHAS," AND OBSERVERS ACCORDINGLY BELIEVE THAT A WAFDIST APPLICATION WILL BE REJECTED BY THE NEW CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.

4. OPPOSITION DEPUTIES ARE NOW CONSIDERING CHALLENGING CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LAW IN COURTS, BUT IN THE MEANTIME IT IS EXPECTED THE LAW WILL BE GAZETTED, AND THUS GO INTO EFFECT IN NEAR FUTURE.

5. BY SEPARATE AIRGRAM, WE ARE SUBMITTING ANALYSIS OF LAW IN DETAIL AND ALSO OF THE WAFD REVIVAL, SADAT'S ADVERSE REACTION TO THIS SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT, AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE USG. ON THE LATTER POINT, DESPITE THE NATIONAL DEBATE AND THE ENTHUSIASM WHICH THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE WAFD HAS ENGENDERED, WE THINK THERE WILL BE LITTLE EFFECT ON US INTERESTS, SINCE WAFD POLICY IS ORIENTED TOWARDS FREE ENTERPRISE, MIDDLE EAST PEACE, AND AN OPEN SOCIETY. AND, IN VIEW OF SADAT'S ANNOUNCED OPPOSITION TO RETURN OF "FEUDALIST/CAPITALIST" WAFDISTS, THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT PARTY EFFECTIVELY IN ANY CASE.

6. IN ADDITION TO THE THREE EXISTING PARTIES, AT LEAST ONE, PERHAPS TWO MORE WILL BE FORMED UNDER NEW LAW, REPRESENTING A SMALL STEP FORWARD TOWARD GREATER DEMOCRACY. IF THESE NEW PARTIES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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AUTHORIZED TO PUBLISH THEIR OWN NEWSPAPERS (WHICH SADAT HAS PLEDGED THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO DO), THE CAUSE OF OPEN, DEMOCRATIC, NATIONAL DEBATE COULD MOVE FORWARD SIGNIFICANTLY.
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